DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 160 679 UD 018 576

TITLE Options in Education Transcript: Program No. 124: "Minimum Competence, Part Two."

INSTITUTION George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C. Inst. for Educational Leadership.; National Public Radio, Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 12 Jun 78

NOTE 25p.; Not available in hard copy due to reproduction quality of the original document; For a related document, see UD 018 575

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.

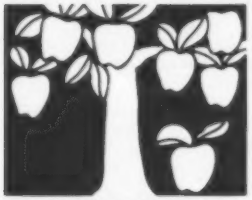
DESCRIPTORS *Basic Skills; *Educational Legislation; Educational Programs; Elementary Secondary Education; *Mastery Tests; Minority Group Children; *National Competency Tests; *Performance Based Education; *State Surveys

ABSTRACT

This transcript of a National Public Radio Broadcast records the second of a two part program devoted to the presentation and discussion of various issues relating to minimum competence in schools. Recorded are the views of educators, school administrators, writers, critics and interested individuals on the following topics: competency tests as prevention; minimum competence legislation; testing which can lead to lawsuits; affective skills and cognitive skills; certificates of attendance in California; competence testing in Virginia, Connecticut, Tennessee, and Massachusetts; testing minorities in Nashville; competence testing in Iowa; and the future of minimum competence testing. A summary of competency testing in the fifty States is also included in this pamplet. (Author/EB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

- ED160679



LISTEN:
let your ear keep an eye on the schools!

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Louisa Nielsen
National Public Radio

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Options in Education
TRANSCRIPT:

UD018576

A co-production of
National Public Radio & the
Institute for Educational Leadership of the George Washington University

AUG 29 1978

Program No. 124:
"MINIMUM COMPETENCE, PART TWO"
June 12, 1978

2 a

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
STUDENTS REFLECT ON THEIR EXAMS	1
COMPETENCY TESTS AS VACCINE - Nat Hentoff, writer and critic	2
MINIMUM COMPETENCE LEGISLATION - Chris Pipho of The Education Commission of the States	3
SOME TESTING LEADS TO LAWSUITS - Merle McClung of the Center for Law and Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts	4
AFFECTIVE SKILLS AND COGNITIVE SKILLS - Scott Thompson of the National Association of Secondary School Principals	5
CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE: A NEW KIND OF DIPLOMA - A report from John MacDonald in Corvallis, Oregon	6
CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE IN CALIFORNIA - A report from Doug Dowie in Sacramento, California	7-8
COMPETENCE TESTING IN VIRGINIA - Dr. Larry Cuban, Superintendent of the Arlington, Virginia public schools	9
COMPETENCE TESTING IN CONNECTICUT - Sally Silveira of the Board of Education in Stamford, Connecticut	9
COMPETENCE TESTING IN TENNESSEE - A report from station WPLN, Nashville	10
TESTING MINORITIES IN NASHVILLE - Dr. Charles Kimbrough, head of the Nashville Chapter of the NAACP	10-11
COMPETENCE TESTING IN IOWA - Dr. Leo Gerst, University of Iowa	13
COMPETENCE TESTING IN MASSACHUSETTS - Gregory Anrig, Massachusetts Commissioner of Education	13-14
MORE ON TESTING MINORITIES - Dr. Kenneth Clark, writer and educator	14
THE FUTURE OF MINIMUM COMPETENCY TESTING - Chris Pipho of the Education Commission of the States	15-16
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUMMARY OF COMPETENCY TESTING IN FIFTY STATES	17-21

"Copyright © 1977 for National Public Radio
and the Institute for Educational Leadership"

"MINIMUM COMPETENCE, PART TWO"

CHILD: A...

CHILD: B...

CHILD: C...

MAN: D...

WOMAN: H...

MAN: I...

MAN: J...

CHILD: K...

MAN: L...

TEENAGER: M...

WOMAN: N...

WOMAN: O...

WOMAN: P...

MERROW: T-I-O-N-S -- Options -- OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. From the ABC's of pre-school to the alphabet soup of government programs, this is OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

* * *

STUDENTS REFLECT ON THEIR EXAMS

STUDENT: It was fairly easy and everything, but it was probably a good experience for us to take the test so we'd know what to do when we graduate, and know what the test will be like in our junior and senior year.

STUDENT: Well, I think it was pretty fair. Just some of the questions I don't feel that we've gone over this year.

STUDENT: It'll kind of brush us up, and, like, we could forget some of the stuff we learned back in the sixth and seventh grade. With this, we have a chance to go over it and stuff.

MERROW: Those students, eighth graders from Tennessee, just took their minimum competency exams.

REINHARDT: And, whether they passed or failed, they've joined a growing group of students across the country who are being tested to see if they've learned basic skills in math, reading, and writing.

MERROW: So far, more than thirty states have adopted some form of minimum competence law or guideline.

REINHARDT: How many states exactly? Well, we can't say. Somewhere between 33 and 36.

MERROW: Some states, notably Florida, have decided to test all high school juniors and seniors; if they don't pass, no diploma.

REINHARDT: Other states are testing kids along the way, say in fourth, fifth, eighth, and ninth grades. The point there is to identify the kids who haven't mastered the material; catch them early and teach them again.

MERROW: But mastered what? What should our kids be learning in school? Here again, the states differ...

REINHARDT: ...and some are having difficulty making up their minds.

MERROW: Some, like Virginia, are requiring that kids become competent in the basics -- reading and arithmetic -- but also in what it calls "the processes of democratic governance" and "the fundamentals of our economic system."

REINHARDT: Last week we brought you the arguments: What should kids learn in school in order to get a diploma? This week, we're reviewing what's happening in the fifty states.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt. And let's begin with some questions for you, taken from minimum competency exams.

MERROW: You'll need a pencil and a piece of paper. We've got ten questions in all, scattered through this week's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

REINHARDT: You'll know one's coming when you hear this music. . . . Ready? John's got the first question.

* * *

MERROW: Question number one: You bought a baseball for $1.43. You gave the clerk a five dollar bill. How much change should you get?

* * *

REINHARDT: We'll give you the answers at the end of the program...

MERROW: ...so you'll know if you're competent.

REINHARDT: Why minimum competency testing? In large part, because of a wide belief that schools are failing, that lots of illiterates are graduating from high school. Some people, like writer and critic Nat Hentoff, see minimum competnecy tests as a kind of vaccine.

COMPETENCY TESTS AS VACCINE

HENTOFF: You've got to start somewhere, and the sooner the better. 'Cause what happens now is, kids all over the country, not only poor kids or black kids or whatever, kids all over the country are being put through school like on a shuttle. And they come out; and as of last year, I think eleven percent of the graduating class of high schools all over the country -- let's forget the drop-outs -- eleven percent of those who graduated were functionally illiterate. We need the vaccine -- fast. This may sound simplistic, but it's the only thing I know that makes any sense. Everything else winds up with the kid being the victim. And that's the way the system has been for as long as I can remember. And with all of their deficiencies and vulnerabilities and great possibilities or misuse and distortion, at least just the notion of competency testing gets a word into the school lexicon that's almost arcane these days: competency.

REINHARDT: Writer Nat Hentoff, talking with Tom Looker. Hentoff said eleven percent of our high school graduates are functionally illerate. Well, there's contradictory evidence that things aren't anywhere near that bad, that the true figure is closer to two percent.

MERROW: Hentoff welcomes minimum competence testing, even though he has grave doubts about the tests themselves. The city of Denver, Colorado actually began testing all its students for competence seventeen years ago. The real surge in interest, though, began in the early 1970s, when Oregon and Arizona became the first states to pass laws requiring testing.

REINHARDT: Chris Pipho probably knows as much about minimum competency legislation as anyone else. It's his job to follow the action for the Education Commission of the States, in Denver. Reporter Jim Falconer talked with Pipho.

PIPHO: Thirty-three states have taken some form of action, either with state board rulings or with legislation. As of this year, we only have two states -- this year's graduating class, the spring of 1978 -- that really have their state rulings in effect. One of those is Oregon, and there the test is a small part of the whole high school graduation requirement. The other is Arizona, and they have had a requirement in for eighth grade promotion and high school graduation since last year. At this point, in Arizona, it's passed down to local districts. The ruling there says that if you're to graduate from high school, you must read, write and compute at the eighth grade level; or, to get out of eighth grade, read, write and compute at the sixth grade level. Now, the state department in Arizona has not done any follow-up, the best I can determine, of how many people failed the test, what test was given. It assumes, almost, by the wording that's used that it will be a norm-referenced test the local districts are using. But the mandate doesn't specify a test, a testing date, or precisely what's involved with it. So, we're not really able to say, yes, it's a better idea or a poorer idea. I don't think we have enough evidence yet to know.

FALCONER: Has it actually had any effect on education of students? Or is it just a barometer, an indication, of what kind of education the students have? Does it have any educational benefits itself?

PIPHO: You mean the test itself? Well, I would suspect it does. There's probably two or three ways that it would spin off. In local districts such as Denver; Westside District in Omaha; Gary, Indiana; West Palm Beach, Florida; and other places, they're saying that it has had a positive effect on the high school program, especially for the middle range of student -- not the real upper student, the upper ten or fifteen percent or the lower ten or fifteen percent. The upper student usually can pass the test without too much difficulty so it has very little effect on his high school or her high school program. In fact, in some of those districts, they say the student will usually select the title for a theme -- the evils of the minimum competency system -- so they can write a theme for the competency requirement while they're getting back at it.

The lower students may be potential special ed students or borderline learning difficulty, something like that. And they usually are not going to be helped. In other words, if they haven't learned how to read by the time they're in tenth grade, just taking a test won't help them read any better, except for that middle range of student. There the high school administration in some of these districts are saying it seems to motivate that group of students. They may have failed one portion of the test, or scored quite low on it, and that seems to motivate the students

REINHARDT: Chris Pipho, of the Education Commission of the States, in Denver, Colorado. He was interviewed for OPTIONS IN EDUCATION by Jim Falconer, of station KCFR, in Denver.

* * *

MERROW: Ready for another question? Here question two.

REINHARDT: When you write a personal check, is it better to fill it out and sign it with a pencil or a pen? Why is one way better than the other?

* * *

MERROW: Last fall, all Florida high school juniors took a three-hour test of math and verbal ability. There were lots of "practical" questions about filling out a job application and balancing a checkbook, and so forth.

REINHARDT: The results shocked Florida. Thirty-six percent of the kids failed the math portion of the test, and eight percent failed the verbal portion.

MERROW: A passing grade was 70. The Florida says that to get a diploma a student must pass both parts of the test.

REINHARDT: Of course, the juniors who failed get another chance, in fact, two more chances.

MERROW: But the Florida story isn't finished. First of all, the rate of failure for minority students was much higher than for whites. In one high school in Jacksonville, nearly all-black Stanton High, 94 percent failed the math section of the test.

REINHARDT: Merle McClung, an attorney for the Center for Law and Education, predicts that racial and linguistic minorities will continue to fail such competency tests wherever they're given because their education is often interior, and because the tests may be culturally biased. McClung says lawsuits are in the offing.

SOME TESTING LEADS TO LAWSUITS

McCLUNG: Many of the testing programs that have been designed, they do not provide for an adequate phase-in period before using the test to deny diplomas. For example, the state of Florida will be imposing this requirement on this year's juniors. So, students in the state of Florida who do not pass the state-wide test will not receive a diploma next year. The state law was passed in 1976, and the exact testing requirements, the performance objectives being tested, were not given to teachers and schools and students until, at best, about a year ago. So, our basic concern is that the testing program has been imposed upon students with very little prior notice. And we think that that is basically unfair, that in order to provide for a testing program fairly, what you need to do is provide a number of years to phase in so teachers can teach somewhat differently to reflect the new course objectives that are being tested; and students have a chance to prepare for the test. And, in our view, one or two year's notice, as in the state of Florida, is clearly inadequate. And the states are going to end up in court because the programs are discriminatory.

That disproportionate racial and linguistic impact is going to be the trigger for legal analysis and legal review to determine whether or not it is fair to impose that kind of test on students if you can make a strong case for the test reflecting prior unequal educational opportunity.

FITZGERALD: In states where the tests are in effect now, are there a lot of state-wide tests, or are there regional tests which sort of take into account maybe cultural disparities or other types of differences from one region to another?

McCLUNG: Well, there seem to be two basically different approaches to competency testing. The state of Florida is one example where you have state-wide standards and a state-wide test. And that kind of approach has the advantage or uniformity. But, it has the disadvantage of one standard which may be at conflict with all the various different standards that local district have been using over the years. The state of California, on the other hand, takes a very different approach. Because there they require competency testing, but each local district is free to develop its own standards, its own assessment procedure, and its own cut-off points. The problem, of course, with the California approach is that it really taxes the resources of a local district very heavily to have to come up with their own standards and come up with their own assessment procedure. And developing a fair and equitable test is a very difficult task, and it can be a very expensive one.

REINHARDT: Merele McClung, an attorney with the Center for Law and Education in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He talked with Crej Fitzgerald of station WGBH in Boston.

MERROW: Will there be lawsuits? The National Association for The Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, has threatened to sue if the graduation requirement isn't changed. Well, the requirement wasn't changed; no word yet from the NAACP.

REINHARDT: Those statistics from Florida, 36 percent failing the math test and eight percent failing the verbal test, set off shock waves of another kind in the educational research community. Why? Because on a valid test, the failure rates are usually similar in broad areas like math and verbal skills.

MERROW: Dr. Gene Glass, former President of The American Educational Research Association, attacked the Florida testing process as arbitrary, tragic,

and bizarre, in part, he says, because the math test was much harder than the verbal test.

REINHARDT: Dr. Glass has urged that the Florida test be suspended immediately.

MERROW: That's apparently not going to happen, though the test is being reviewed.

REINHARDT: Meanwhile, Florida's educators are asking for -- and getting -- more money from the state legislature for remedial work for those who failed the test.

MERROW: The schools have gotten an additional ten million dollars, and are asking for 26 million more.

* * *

REINHARDT: Here's question three.

MERROW: Which of the following is a professional singer of pop music? Aaron Copland. Paul Hindemith. Frank Sinatra. Wolfgang Mozart.

* * *

REINHARDT: Some of the debate over minimum competency testing involves what should be tested for, academic skills or "life" skills.

MERROW: There is a difference. An academic skills question would ask something like this: "If there are 50 teeth in every three inches of a hacksaw blade, how many teeth would there be in 7 1/2 inches?"

REINHARDT: A "life" or "survival" skills test would ask, "To saw very hard metal, should you buy a hacksaw blade with a lot of teeth or with few teeth?"

MERROW: In Oregon, they're testing for academic and survival skills, and maybe a few others as well. Oregon also makes the distinction between affective skills and cognitive skills.

REINHARDT: Scott Thompson of the National Association of Secondary School Principals explains.

AFFECTIVE SKILLS AND COGNITIVE SKILLS

THOMPSON: It is more difficult to measure competencies of what educators call an affective skill than a cognitive skill. By that I mean it's more difficult to measure by competency tests something like a safety competency or a family life competency than it is to measure a competency in reading and writing. Therefore, our feeling is that a person should move into a competency testing program in phases or stages, that it's perhaps too ambitious to try to measure 12 or 15 or 18 or 20 competencies that include social skills. But our position is that, to begin with, you should start with the reading skills, writing skills. And then, in fact, if we are graduating more students that are successful in learning those skills and applying those skills -- and the applying of the skills is what's important -- then maybe we could move into social skills. But, we say begin soberly and carefully so that you are on a straight course and do not have to back up two or three times because you were too ambitious in the beginning.

REINHARDT: Scott Thompson of the National Association of Secondary School Principals in Reston, Virginia.

MERROW: Oregon began on the straight and narrow by requiring proof of competence in six areas: reading, writing, speaking, listening, analyzing, and computing.

REINHARDT: The law also says that competence must be demonstrated at a later date in seven other areas, most of which are either "survival" skills or "affective" skills, like "social responsibility" and "personal development."

MERROW: But Oregon lawmakers put off the test of those skills for a year, and they may postpone it again.

REINHARDT: But high school seniors in Oregon were tested this spring, and those who couldn't prove their competence didn't get diplomas.

MERROW: Instead, they got certificates of attendance. What's that worth? Well, reporter John MacDonald of station KOAC asked that question of Dr. Gordon Ascher of the Oregon Department of Education

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE: A NEW KIND OF DIPLOMA

ASCHER: Well, it depends on who you show it to. It may be of value to an employer who, even though the person has not met all the requirements for graduation, at least shows that at least this person can attend, be punctual, and maybe that is all that is required for a particular job.

MACDONALD: If the senior is shy a few competencies and can't get a diploma just yet, are there ways he can make up the work?

ASCHER: Yes. In fact, in this whole system, we've built in many alternative ways to meet the requirements. And so, competencies can be met in all sorts of ways. In fact, students can go back to school up until the age 21 if they wish to complete these requirements.

MACDONALD: What's the next step in this program?

ASCHER: Well, the next step, really, is an educational process. You really have to get people to understand what the program is about. It takes a long time to institute any change of this magnitude. It's coming; it's coming slowly. It's not coming too quickly; we could cite other states where they attempted change too quickly -- and that really is a very negative thing. So, I think the next thing to do is continue working with the program over the next few years and just improve upon it.

MACDONALD: Dr. Gordon Ascher of the Oregon Department of Education. The state guidelines essentially call for competency in the area of the three R's, but individual school districts have gone beyond that in their requirements for graduation. For example, in the capital city of Salem, seniors must be able to balance a checkbook, compute with metrics, pass a written driving test, complete a simple tax form, understand a rental agreement, and demonstrate a job skill. Salem lists 35 separate competency areas.

Corvallis, a university city, lists 110. They include such things as: recognize stated and hidden meanings in mass media; differentiate fact from opinion; identify group member rights and responsibilities; find a solution to everyday social conflicts; demonstrate a working knowledge of simple machines; identify elements of good nutrition; and utilize comparison shopping techniques. I took a spot check of six high schools to see if their seniors were ready. Five of them are in the Willamet Valley, where most Oregonians live, and they include a wide spectrum of socio-economic and ethnic groups. I asked one basic question: "How many seniors will fail to graduate solely because they have failed to master some of the competencies?" The answer everywhere was the same: "None will fail." Oh, some seniors won't get diplomas and may be short in the competencies, but they also have failed in some of the regular course work. The competencies alone will flunk no one.

But the sixth high school official I called scoffed at that. His school is located in sparsely settled Eastern Oregon, where the people are descended largely from pioneer sheep and cattle ranchers. They pride themselves on what they take to be their independent thinking, dry wit, and a practical turn of mind. This principal told me, "Of course they're not going to flunk anybody for lacking the competencies. For every student they'd flunk, there would be two parents voting against the next school budget. And they have enough 'no' votes already." He said his school gives a diploma to everyone, even those who can't read. "They never will read either," he added. "We teach them to learn to live without reading." He thinks the competency program is of no value and told of a brilliant senior who is however weak in math. When told he was not passing his math competency, the student said, "Oh hell, tell those so-and-sos I'll buy a computer." But, this Eastern Oregon man and Dr. Ascher may not be so

far apart. Ascher thinks the competencies, if properly applied, will teach students how to live effectively in the outside world. Perhaps in some places that needs to be taught; in Eastern Oregon, it comes naturally. I'm John MacDonald at the Oregon state capitol in Salem.

REINHARDT: The students MacDonald talked to had faith in their ability to pass, or perhaps they just expected the test to be a snap.

MERROW: Anyway, since MacDonald conducted his spot check, some test results have been made public, not for the entire state, but for some cities and towns.

REINHARDT: We have the results from two cities, Corvallis and Salem.

MERROW: In Corvallis, 570 seniors got diplomas. Only one senior failed to graduate only because of failing the competency test. That's a failure rate well below one percent.

REINHARDT: In Salem, 1,450 seniors got diplomas; 25 students did not get diplomas because they failed the competency test. That's a failure rate of less than two percent.

MERROW: In both cities, a few students failed to graduate because they lacked enough credits and also failed the competency test. But we're not counting them because the shortage of credits by itself was enough to deny them diplomas.

* * *

MERROW: Ready for question four on our minimum competency test? It's got two parts.

REINHARDT: Part A: One half percent of 20 equals what? Twenty-four plus 380 plus 6 equals what?

* * *

REINHARDT: Some Oregon seniors are getting certificates of attencance, not diplomas, because they failed to pass the competency tests. Another west coast state, California, may also give certificates of attendance to failing students.

MERROW: Here's the background: Two years ago, California's legislature approved a law requiring proof of minimum competence as a graduation requirement, to begin with the class of 1981.

REINHARDT: Local district set their own standards, and schools will have to make progress reports for each student every year. Parent conferences are also required for students who aren't making progress.

MERROW: But what about the students who can't meet the minimum standards even with remedial help, parent conferences, and so forth? Well, some high school principals want to award "certificates of attendance," which the law does not now provide for. The California Department of Education is worried that certificates of attendance wouldn't be worth much and that most of them would go to minority students.

REINHARDT: Doug Dowie reports on the controversy over certificates of attendance for those who can't meet the minimums.

CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE IN CALIFORNIA

DOWIE: The certificates would be handed out at graduation ceremonies to students who could not pass the exams but otherwise finished the required courses. It may be cosmetic, but the principals say those students deserve something for sticking in school for 12 years. The State Department of Education is studying that request. The author of the examination establishing the exams is Santa Barbara Assemblyman Gary Hart, a former high school teacher. He doesn't think the certificates of attendance are entirely cosmetic.

HART: There are some real, very real problems out there with senior

week activities of one kind or another, and that a student who has come and participated in school even though they haven't done well -- I'm not sure the State of California should say under no circumstance shall such a student be, you know, allowed to participate in those activities. I think that's probably a decision that must be made at the local level by individual school districts. I am concerned that the standards that are going to be established are not in some districts going to be very high, or there are not going to be very rigor- our efforts to make sure that students measure up to those standards. And, I guess, to that extent I am concerned about the legislation. We're going to be monitoring carefully. But, I think allowing some options for school districts is really consistent with what we want to do here in California which to allow quite a bit of discretionary authority in establishing and enforcing minimum standards.

DOWIE: High school freshmen in California, the first class that must pass exams to graduate, claim the tests are not a topic of conversation or concern among their classmates yet. Most, however, are in favor of the certificates of attendance. They say some students never attempt more than a barely passing grade, and there's little sense in keeping them in high school forever.

STUDENT: They should try to learn them all to do all kinds of words, try to teach them math, English, try to help them. But they won't listen; they keep goofing off, so she just goes and helps the other students, 'cause they be quiet and they learn, they listen and everything to what she say. Then, when she say do this, the student will say, "Well, what we supposed to do?" And she'll say, "Well, you should have been listening."

STUDENT: I feel it's both the teacher and the student that's doing this. Because in the beginning the teacher will give the same attention to everybody until a student goofs off. And afterwards, she'll just give up on him. But the teacher, she should start pressuring the students that don't hardly do anything, pressuring them more than the smart ones so they can say, "Hey, I'm tired of her on my back; I might as well try harder to get her off my back."

STUDENT: If a student isn't doing what the teacher asks of the student, then I guess there's only one thing the teacher should do. And that is get him out of that class and into a class where he's going to be active. Because he's not learning anything if he's just sitting in the back of the room, you know, throwing paper wads or whatever.

DOWIE: It will be years before California's system of establishing minimum standards of proficiency can be critically analyzed. It's quite possible the legislature will alter the program prior to 1981, further frustrating educators who must cope with its mandates. Dr. Lawrence J. Peter, author of "The Peter Principle," once said, "Competence, like truth, beauty, and the contact lens, is in the eye of the beholder." Educators in California would certainly agree. For OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, this is Doug Dowie in Sacramento, California.

* * *

MERROW: Here's question five, a test of your knowledge of art skills and concepts. Answer true or false to these three statements: Pure color overpowers grayed colors; bright colors dominate dark colors; small amounts of one color can be used to vary the darkness or lightness of another color.

* * *

REINHARDT: You may have missed one of those three true-false statements because you weren't listening carefully. Well, that can get you in trouble in Utah, where listening is a competency to be tested.

MERROW: In Utah, each school district will set its own standards of competence in the following state-mandated areas, in addition to listening: reading, writing, arithmetic, democratic governance, consumerism, and problem solving.

REINHARDT: Local districts, though, choose the test and decide on the passing level.

MERROW: "Local control" is a consistent cry from educators regarding minimum competency. It wasn't their idea in the first place -- generally it

comes from the politicians, not the educators -- but the educational professionals don't want the politicians choosing the tests or setting the standards.

REINHARDT: The state of Virginia will require minimum competence tests for graduation, beginning with the class of 1981. *One local district, Arlington,* has created its own test, partially in hopes of slowing down the push from the top for state-wide tests.

MERROW: The superintendent, Dr. Larry Cuban, explains why he objects to state-wide tests.

COMPETENCE TESTING IN VIRGINIA

CUBAN: Well, what you is that you have a commercial test, which are produced by a number of the educational testing services, the American College Testing has one. And they sell these tests in school districts. What they do is those tests are normed on a certain number of people. They have what they call a norm group. And what they do is, they establish cut-off points. If you score 30 on a test, that means something, if you score 40 on a test. And what happens is the state will have to say that, for the sake of example, that all those who score below 32 cannot get a diploma. Now, I don't think that's wise because, number one, it's normed on a group outside of the state. Secondly, there's an enormous diversity of children in a state such as Virginia, and by setting such a cut-off poing and linking it to a diploma, there are enormous social costs that are involved in that. To withhold a diploma because a kid scored 32 rather than 33 is giving the power to a test that no test should have, from my point of view.

REINHARDT: But won't that happen with the test that's devised here locally?

CUBAN: We have, number one, we have an appeal mechanism, that if youngsters feel the test -- it was a bad day for the test, or that there was something wrong with the test -- we have that appeal mechanism. Secondly, we have a repeated, we have a remedial structure built into it that will occur over a three-year period. Thirdly, our test is related to our objectives in what we teach. And the competencies of what we teach are what we think kids will need outside in the world, as related to here in Arlington. No commercially produced test can have that same kind of customizing and tailoring that a locally produced test can.

MERROW: The superintendent of the Arlington, Virginia schools, Dr. Larry Cuban, telling why he wants local control of competency testing.

REINHARDT: Ninth graders in Arlington took the local competency test for the first time this spring. Nearly half failed the graduation requirement, but they'll have eight more chances to pass before graduation day.

MERROW: Another local community, Stamford, Connecticut, doesn't have minimum come from the local level, not the state.

COMPETENCE TESTING IN CONNECTICUT

SILVEIRA: There's so many differences between local communities. Here in the state of Connecticut, we have very, very rural communities. You have extremely suburban communities with relatively homogeneous student population, and then you have a Stamford, which is almost a mini-New York City, with a totally heterogeneous school population.

REINHARDT: Sally Silveira, a member of the Board of Education in Stamford, Connecticut. She wants local control of minimum competency testing.

* * *

MERROW: Here's question six for you, from a minimum competence test.

REINHARDT: You are to buy hot dogs for a picnic for 30 people. Each person will eat two hot dogs. How many packages will you need to buy if there are ten hot dogs in each package?

* * *

STUDENT: The way our math teacher and English teacher talked about how it was gonna be got us all scared, I guess.

STUDENT: The teacher said it was easy, but all tests, you know, sort of make me nervous anyway. And the teacher did review with us, so I think it was fair.

STUDENT: I felt that it was fair and at the right grade level too, because there are a lot of people that have already graduated that didn't have a chance to take the test, and they can't even fill out applications for a job and stuff.

REINHARDT: Those eighth graders from junior high schools in Tennessee just took their first minimum competency test. The state requires such tests in grades 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, and 12. Beginning in 1982, seniors will have to pass a competence test to get a diploma.

MERROW: Two reporters from station WPLN in Nashville, Linda Lancaster and Michael Nelson, also talked with some junior high teachers about the tests.

COMPETENCE TESTING IN TENNESSEE

TEACHER: Well, I felt that the math section had four problems dealing with one objective. There were 20 objectives, and I don't believe that it was sufficient to deal with the whole program.

TEACHER: Since most of these students are tested in the eighth grade just as a reflection of what they have learned, I feel the test was fair. I don't feel threatened by it's reflecting on me, but I don't feel that I should bear the brunt of what a student does or does not do on that test.

TEACHER: It takes a lot of preparation before-hand, but I think it's going to be very revealing, not only to students, but to teachers and parents as well. And, it doesn't frighten me. I think we're going to find some students who can't do it. But, I think it gives them incentive to work.

REINHARDT: Would low scores on the tests be evidence of bad teaching? No, according to Jim Turberville, the principal of one junior high school in Nashville.

TURBERVILLE: As research shows, it will reflect more the home situation. It will reflect to some degree teachers' efforts. But it will mostly allow us to see what sort of remediation we need done. I assume you know what I'm talking about when I say "research indicates how well students do on tests." Where there is reading in the home, things of this nature, that indicates more of a student's chances of success on any kind of standardized test. I think the test is a minimum competency test, and it certainly is at a minimum level. I would hope our students would do much better than just the minimum. We also have a certain percentage of our students who need the standards where they are so that they do have a chance to pass it. As you know, they have to attain a score of 70 on all four sub-tests to be considered passing. And that is quite high for some of our students.

REINHARDT: Minorities in Nashville and in Tennessee generally are concerned that the tests may create problems for minority students, that they may be culturally biased in favor of white middle class students. And so, the Nashville NAACP is withholding judgment, according to Dr. Charles Kimbrough, head of the Nashville chapter of the NAACP.

TESTING MINORITIES IN NASHVILLE

KIMBROUGH: We don't think it is a good thing until it is clarified by what the test seeks to find out in terms of what the child has been exposed to. And, in fact, we have some great reservation about that because there's too much, at this point, racism in the test for it to be objective, and especially of particular importance to black children and children in general

MERROW: Dr. Charles Kimbrough of the Nashville, Tennessee NAACP. Jim Turberville, the junior high school principal, says that the tests are culturally biased, but that that just reflects the real world.

KIMBROUGH: The question was, "Are tests fair?" And the argument that has been propounded is that they're culturally biased. Well, certainly they're culturally biased. But our ways of success in life are culturally biased. If a student -- whatever socio-economic backgroung he comes from -- cannot compete with certain competencies when he gets out into the work world, he's not going to be hired. Or he's going to be relegated to a low level position in society. And if we can't require him, through testing, to come up to that standard, then we're doing him a great injustice. Now we can change the testing around. We can make it culturally biased for any of the sub-cultures that we have, and yet that would actually do the student more harm when it comes time to compete in life for a job, 'cause that's not how jobs are based.

REINHARDT: Dr. Charles Kimbrough, head of the Nashville, Tennessee Chapter of the NAACP.

MERROW: That material was recorded for OPTIONS IN EDUCATION by Linda Lancaster, Michael Nelson, and Larry Adams, of station WPLN, Nashville, Tennessee.

REINHARDT: Another southern state, South Carolina, is getting into the minimum competence action, but with a slightly different twist. You've heard about objections from racial minorities in Florida, Tenness, and other states. Well, in South Carolina, the legislation was introduced and sponsored by a black legislator, representative Joseph Murray. Bob Austin of station WEPR reports.

COMPETENCE TESTING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

AUSTIN: Legislators in South Carolina such as Representative Murray perceive that something is wrong with the state schools. They feel that too many students are graduating from high school deficient in basic skills.

MURRAY: It's all around us. What the problem is is when kids are developing problems within that 12 or 13 year system, those problems are not being addressed. They are being passed on to the next grade level. And that's bad, because it can only get worse as it goes up the line. And eventually, he just becomes so frustrated that he doesn't care any more. So then, evidently, the administration just gets to the point where they just feel, "Well, we'll just tolerate him for another three or four years. Then we won't have to worry about him any more." Well, they might not have to worry about him. But we who are paying taxes and we who are making laws have to worry about him. Because he'll either become a ward of the state, one way or the other. Either because he can't get a job, and he'll probably wind up on welfare, or into drugs, or into crime. Then it really costs us. Well, I say, "Let's spend a hundred bucks back here on this child," and make sure that he gets what he's supposed to get and let him get an opportunity to get a good shot at a successful life. And we'll save a lot of money down the road.

AUSTIN: I'd like to bring up another point here. You know, in other states black groups are opposing minimum competency bills. And you're a black legislator in South Carolina, and I gather that you don't share your fellow blacks' opposition to minimum competency bills.

MURRAY: This might surprise you, but I do. (laughs) If I lived in Florida or Georgia or Colorado or Virginia or some of these other places where they have minimum competency programs, I would be joining them in opposing it, because of the thing they call cultural bias. And that's the problem, you see. I was reading over some literature the other day and it's so evident that there can be cultural bias. An example would be, if you showed a kid from a low income area -- identify a picture of a dining room, for instance -- well that kid, more than likely, will identify that dining room with a stove and a sink and a little small kitchen. So therefore, if you showed him a picture of a dining room table with six chairs, a buffet and a china closet, he's not going to be able to relate to that. But what we're doing in South Carolina is, we're setting objectives. And we're developing a curriculum that would expose those kids to everything that we would expect them to achieve in that objective. And then we're going to test to find out how close they came to mastering those objectives, which, in fact, eliminates the possibility of cultural bias because the kids will get the exposure to everything we require at the end of the year.

So I don't think that we would have the opposition in South Carolina to our competency program or our basic skills assessment program that

you would find in other states.

AUSTIN: I talked to a white legislator who voted for the bill, Chris Pratt of Anderson County, and asked him if minimum competency would punish the state's black youngsters.

PRATT: No, on the contrary -- and I've discussed this with many of the proponents and opponents alike -- no, I think this will be an asset to the blacks. The problem with black people, and the problem with any lower income level, is we all know that a child's brain develops in those first few years of their lives. And it's so much due to that home environment and those early years, the first three grades in school. And, so, we get back down to the fact that let's find these problems early and let's do something about them. Sure, there may be a few, and there may be some more blacks that have to stay back at first. But, gosh, where are we going now? I ask that question, where are we going now with just promoting and promoting promoting. And they go out into the society and say, "I've got a piece of paper." If I've got a business; I've got a small real estate that I didn't really have started yet -- but if I was hiring somebody from high school and he had a diploma, I'd laugh at him. Because it doesn't mean to me -- show me what you can do, you know. And before these children are going to be able to show people what they can do, they're going to have to be trained in those basic areas.

AUSTIN: I asked Joe Murray if he sponsored this legislation because he thought minimum competency was specifically a black problem.

MURRAY: Oh no, no. And I'm going to be very honest with you. When I first started, I thought it was, you know. Because my exposure, before coming to the general assembly, had been, you know, in the black community. And I thought that it was a black problem, until I got into this thing. And then I found out that it's a people problem, it's a children's problem, and it applies not only to blacks but to anybody who's in that system that develops a deficiency somewhere along the line. If they don't have the parents that are on top of the situation, then they're in trouble.

AUSTIN: With the passage of the minimum competency bill, the South Carolina General Assembly will have moved from directly making educational appropriations to determining educational policy, something that educators seem to resent. However, whether it's the educator's fault or not, the legislators and the people feel something is wrong with the education their children are receiving, and they'd like to do something about it, even if it means starting a whole new expensive series of tests. In Anderson, South Carolina, I'm Bob Austin.

REINHARDT: The bill passed by the house in South Carolina requires testing at the beginning of first, second, third, sixth and eighth grades, to be phased in gradually over a period of years. Test results will determine who gets remedial training.

MERROW: After about nine years, when there are students in the system who have grown up with these tests, an exit exam for high school graduation will be given.

REINHARDT: The Sough Carolina Senate has passed a similar bill, and the differences between the two are now being worked out.

* * *

REINHARDT: Here's question seven from an actual minimum competency test.

MERROW: If you read the directions on a bottle of medicine that say, "Take for Nausea," which of the following meanings would apply? A) The feeling that one is about to vomit; B) Seasickness; C) Extreme disgust; D) Loathing.

* * *

REINHARDT: One state that has not joined the minimum competency parade is Iowa. Why? Well, according to our reporter Jim Haney, there are a couple of reasons. For one thing, most Iowa districts use the old, familiar Iowa Test of Basic Skills as their way of measuring competence. Plus, Iowa has the highest

literacy rate in the nation, and so they're not worried.

MERROW: Reporter Haney talked with Dr. Leo Gerst of the University of Iowa who told him that there are other problems with bringing minimum competency testing to Iowa. The biggest one is money.

COMPETENCE TESTING IN IOWA

GERST: The problem becomes one of the construction of the test and having a test that really is valid, that really is secure, that really does the type of thing you're attempting to do, and that from one year to another that you can relate them. This is an extremely expensive process. You start doing this for each of the 449 school districts and you're using a tremendous amount of your resources.

HANEY: The chances of the Iowa legislature passing any kind of minimum competency testing in the very future appear slim. A bill that would have required all local school boards to adopt standards for measuring reading, writing and computation skills was introduced in the Iowa Senate last year. The standards would have been based on state criteria adopted by the State Board of Public Instruction. After July 1 of 1980, no student could have graduated from an Iowa high school without having met the standards. The Iowa legislature, though, concluded its session last month without considering the proposal. So not the bill is officially dead.

REINHARDT: That report for OPTIONS IN EDUCATION from Jim Haney, station WSUI, Iowa City, Iowa.

* * *

MERROW: Well, maybe Iowa won't require a test, but we will. Here's question eight.

REINHARDT: If you borrow $15,000 at 11 percent interest for one year, how much would you have to pay at the end of the year?

* * *

REINHARDT: Massachusetts is another state, like Iowa, that has been reluctant to get involved, but now it has taken the step. After studying the issue for several years, the Massachusetts Board of Education is about to act on a proposal from a committee of citizens and educators.

MERROW: The proposal: Local competency tests that will not be tied to the diploma.

REINHARDT: There's more. Tom Looker talked with Massachusetts Commissioner of Education Gregory Anrig.

COMPETENCE TESTING IN MASSACHUSETTS

ANRIG: In this instance, what I think we are doing is defining rather specifically, as you get near to high school graduation, what those standards should be. As you get further away from high school graduation, we're not setting them very specifically. I do believe in local autonomy up to a point. But certain issues there is not autonomy on. And it seems to me as the youngster moves on to the working world, there should be more similarity among those 436 school districts than differences. Because the youngster won't work in that town in which he or she is going to school for the most part. And I think that's really the key balance that we're trying to achieve here.

LOOKER: Massachusetts, then, has really not opted for a state-wide minimum competence test delivered at the secondary level. Is that correct?

ANRIG: If by that you mean solely a state test which all students must take and there's no choice to that, it is clear to me that the Board will approve another option than that. The option which I will recommend to them is that they can use any test they want at the primary and intermediate level. At the secondary level, they will have to select from three categories of tests. Either use the state test, which we will prepare -- and we've already drafted and

had initial testing of the state test -- that will be available without charge to school districts. Or they can select from a list of approved tests, commercially available, which we have examined and feel that meet the education specifications or standards that we've set. Or the third is that they can develop their own test if they choose to and simply submit that to us for review to be sure that it meets the standards and use that. But there won't be one test which everybody must use. There will be choices, but it is clear that there will have to be a test.

REINHARDT: Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, Gregory Anrig, talking with Tom Looker.

MERROW: A key part of the Massachusetts proposal is for pressure on the local schools without penalizing the students. Anrig wants the scores published in the aggregate, not for individuals.

REINHARDT: That will tell the communities how the schools are doing, without stigmatizing the kids.

* * *

REINHARDT: You won't have to publish your own score on this test, but we'd love to know how you did. Here's question number nine, three statements which you must mark "yes" or "no."

MERROW: In a democratic society, would you expect these things to happen?: A) The president vetoes a bill passed by the Congress. B) The date and place of an election are not made public. C) People are kept out of all meetings of the City Council.

* * *

DR. KENNETH CLARK ON TESTING MINORITIES

CLARK: We have two sets of tests now, Regents tests for those youngsters who someone decides are educable youngsters whose parents are middle class or affluent and still in the public schools and who will be going on to college. We are giving them fairly acceptable tests to prepare them for scholastic aptitude, college entrance examination board tests. While the masses of inner city youngsters who are really not being educated, we are saying, "Well, there's no poing in giving them Regents; let's let them get by on anything." And I presume unconsciously, we hope that they will drop out of school.

REINHARDT: That's Dr. Kenneth Clark, a member of the New York Board of Regents, which governs education in that state.

MERROW: The "anything" that he says is being given to minorities and poor kids is a test of minimum competency, which Clark and other critics have attacked as being too easy.

REINHARDT: New York has had minimum competency testing since 1976, and the competency tests were supposed to be a graduation requirement beginning in June of 1979.

MERROW: However, because of the intensity of the attacks on the tests ("too easy" is the general accusation) the regents have just voted to change the tests.

REINHARDT: There will be a new test for the class of 1981. The old test will still be used in 1979 and 1980. Dr. Clark, incidentally, was the only one of the thirteen regents to vote against the new, tougher competency test. He says that competency tests, no matter how tough, avoid the real issue which he says is the inadequacy of teaching.

MERROW: Anyway, New York's competency tests for the next two years will require students to show understanding of a restaurant menu and read the time from a picture of a clock face.

REINHARDT: But beginning in 1981, students will have to be able to read and interpret prose paragraphs of increasing difficulty and answer questions in

algebra and geometry.

* * *

MERROW: One last test question for you.

REINHARDT: The big hand is on six, and the little hand is halfway between six and seven. What time is it?

* * *

REINHARDT: Well, we haven't covered all the states by a long shot, but we will in the transcript of this two part series in minimum competency. We'll tell you how to get a transcript at the end of the show.

MERROW: But before we get there, there's a reaction setting in -- really two reactions -- but, they add up to "slow down."

REINHARDT: On the one hand, there's concern that the tests may punish racial and language minorities unfairly, and that will probably mean lawsuits.

MERROW: Another aspect of the reaction: politicians and educators realizing that they may be moving too fast, especially by requiring a competency test for graduation without giving students several years of preparation.

REINHARDT: Minimum competency tests may also pose a special problem for handicapped children. After all, they now have individualized education plans, so shouldn't their competency tests also be individualized? If handicapped kids have to take the regular tests, there may well be law suits ahead, we've been told.

MERROW: There's another aspect of minimum competence testing that isn't getting the attention it probably deserves, but it will.

REINHARDT: That's the expense, the cost of all this testing, and the time getting ready for the testing, and the remediation.

MERROW: The National Institute of Education has just put out a report that indicates that Oregon school districts spent between $26,000 and $173,000 getting ready for testing. Record-keeping may cost as much as $25,000 per year at the local level. A 100-item test will cost between $15,000 and $63,000, according to the report. Scoring the test the reporting the results usually costs about $1.00 per student.

REINHARDT: Then there's the remedial work. Washington State expects its remedial programs in math and reading to cost between 43 and 47 million dollars apiece. New Jersey expects its compensatory education bill to climb to 70 million dollars next year, up from 30 million dollars. Florida is spending 10 million and wants 26 million dollars more.

MERROW: What's ahead for minimum competency testing? Here's a prediction from Chris Pipho of the Education Commission of the States.

THE FUTURE OF MINIMUM COMPETENCY TESTING

PIPHO: The current, now, in the last 12 months, is to move that down, to make it a barometer for an early warning system, to give the test earlier -- grade three, grade six, five, seven, nine. In other words, not allowing a high school senior to go through 11 or 12 years of schooling, and then give him a test and say, "Sorry, you can't get a high school diploma." But, to make it an early warning system both for teachers and for parents to say, "Yes, we have some reading problems at grade three. Let's see if we can design an individual program or a school program which will help attack it. I think the other might be that parents of gifted students are very concerned that minimum standards may become the only things schools worry about. And I think there could be a trend to do exactly what we've done in the Federal law for handicapped students. What we need is an individualized education plan, perhaps an individualized student performance cut-off score on a minimum competency test. If that should happen, that might come as a result of court tests; it might come as a result of a lot of parents saying, "Well, we've got a minimal standard; it doesn't apply to my

student; they can already do it, and what are you going to do about raising their ability; how are you going to encourage them to do more work." The American way has never been step over the lowest hurdle and sit down in the shade. We would say if you pass the minimum level, you can get a high school diploma, that the second level involves a few more things, and you go on up to students, perhaps, wanting to go to an Ivy League college. You may have to go through all seven layers of skills. But it's sort of a personal encouragement, motivational kind of tool that they could use with the guidance counselors in that school system.

REINHARDT: Chris Pipho of the Education Commission of the States in Denver, Colorado. He talked with Jim Falconer, station KCFR, Denver.

* * *

MERROW: And now, you can find out if you're minimally competent. Here are the answers to our ten questions.

REINHARDT: Number one: $3.57.

MERROW: Number two: Pen, because it can't be erased.

REINHARDT: Number three: Frank Sinatra.

MERROW: Number four: A) .1 B) 410

REINHARDT: Number five: True, True, True

MERROW: Number six: Six packages of hot dogs.

REINHARDT: Number seven: A and B, that is, the feeling that one is about to vomit and sea-sickness.

MERROW: Number eight: $16,650.

REINHARDT: Number nine: Yes, No, No.

MERROW: It's six-thirty.

* * *

REINHARDT: By the way, the passing score is seventy percent. If you failed, you might want to listen to next week's program on compensatory education. Even if you passed, we hope you'll listen. . . . The first show in this series took a look at the pros and cons of minimum competency testing. Is the rush to competency testing not only inevitable, but good?

MERROW: In the transcripts of these two programs, you'll find a list of what all the states are doing and titles of the best printed material we have come across with information on how you can get copies.

REINHARDT: You can get the transcript for one dollar by writing National Public Radio -- Education, Washington, D.C. 20036.

MERROW: Cassettes of the two programs are available for ten dollars. Just ask for programs 123 and 124, "Minimum Competence."

REINHARDT: We'll send you, free for the asking, our schedule for the next three months and broadcast times on NPR stations around the country.

MERROW: And please include the call letters of your local NPR station. Material for this program came in part from Jim Falconer, station KCFR, Denver, Colorado; Greg Fitzgerald, WGBH, Boston; John MacDonald, KOAC, Corvallis, Oregon; Rich Newton, KUSU, Logan, Utah; Linda Lancaster, Michael Nelson and Larry Adams, WPLN, Nashville, Tennessee; Bob Austin, WEPR, Clemson, South Carolina; Jim Haney, WSUI, Iowa City, Iowa; Tom Looker in Amherst, Massachusetts; Doug Dowie in Sacramento, California; and Bill Toohey in New York City.

REINHARDT: OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is a co-production of National Public Radio and The Institute for Educational Leadership of The George Washington

University.

MERROW: Principal support for this series is provided by the National Institute of Education. Other funds come to us from Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

REINHARDT: OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is written and produced by John Merrow. The Associate Producer is Katharine Ferguson. The Assistant Producer in Natalie Iglitz. Technical assistance for this program by Robert Nock, Ralph Woods, and Mark Hoffman. I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

* * *

For further information:

"Speaking Out: The Use of Tests in the Policy Arena," Proceedings of the New Jersey Conference, Education Policy Research Institute, 1977, Educational Testing Service.

"A Citizens' Introduction to Minimum Competency Programs for Students," Southeastern PUblic Education Program, American Friends Service Committee, 401 Columbia Building, Columbia, South Carolina 29201, April, 1978, $2.00.

"Basic Skills Assessment Around the Nation," Educational Testing Service, September, 1977.

"Competency Tests and Graduation Requirements," The National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091, 1976.

"Let's Talk about...Minimum Competency Testing," Education Commission of the States, 300 Lincoln Tower, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80295, 1978.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Summary of Competency Testing in Fifty States
May 1978

	AL	AK	AZ	AR	CA	CO	CT	DE	FL	GA	HI	ID	IL	IN	IA	KS	KY	LA	ME	MD	MA	MI	MN	MS	MO
1. State Mand. Tests	Y	N	Y*	N	Y	N	N*	Y*	Y	N*	N*	Y	N*	Y	N	N	Y	Y*	Y*	Y	N*	Y*	N	N	Y
2. Source of Mandate	SB		SB		L			SB	L	SB		SB		SB			L	L	L	L SB		L SB			SB
3. State Approved Tests	Y		N	N	N	N		Y	Y	Y	N	Y		Y	N		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N		Y
4. Local Tests	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	N	Y	NA	N		Y	N		N	Y	N	N			Y		N
5. Tied to Graduation	Y		Y	N	Y	LO		Y N	Y	N		?		N	N		N	N	N	Y		N	N		N
6. Tied to Promotion	N		Y	N	N	LO		N LO	Y	N		N		LO	N		N	N	N	LO		N	N		N
7. Grade Levels Tested	3 6 9 11		8 12		4-6 7-9 10-11	LO		11	5 5 8, 11	1 8 10		9		3 6 10 + H	NA		3, 5 7 10	4 11 ∂11	8 11	3 7 9 11		4 7 10*			9*
8. Remediation Required	Y		N	N	Y	N		N	Y		N	Y		N	N		Y	N	N	Y		Y	N		N
9. St. Funds/Remediation	N		N	N	N	N		N	Y	Y	Y	N		N	N		Y	N	N	N		Y	N		N
10. Year Implemented	78		76		78	75		78	77	76		78		79	NA		78	77	77	77		76			79
11. First Grad. Year	81		76		81			81	79	82		82			NA		80	NA	NA	82		NA			83
12. St. Equiv. Exam	Y		N	G	Y	G	G	N	G	N		LO	Y	N	N		Y	N	Y	UN		N	N		N
13. Test Areas																									
Reading	√		√		√			√	√	√		√		√			√	√	√	√		√			√
Writing	√		√		√			√	√			√					√	√	√	√		√			√
Math. Computation	√		√		√				√	√		√		√			√	√	√	√		√			√
Spelling								√	√			√		√			√								√
Listening																						√			√
Communication								√						√								√			√
Other (See page 3)						LO			√	√				√			√			√		√			√

N = No	L = Legislature	UN = Undecided
Y = Yes	LO = Local Option	SD = State Department
* = Modification Expected by 9/78	NA = Not Applicable	? = Unknown
SB = State Board	G = CED	H = or Parallel

	MT	NB	NV	NH	NJ	NM	NY	NC	ND	OH	OK	OR	PA	RI	SC	SD	TN	TX	UT	VT	VA	WA	WV	WI	WY
1. State Mand. Test	N	N	Y	N	Y*	Y	Y*	Y	N	N*	N	N*	N*	N*	N*	N	Y	N*	N*	N	Y	N	N	N	N
2. Source of Mandate		SB SD	L	SD	L	SB	SB	L				SB					SB		SB	SB	L				
3. State Approved Tests	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y		N		N	N			N	Y		N	N	Y		Y	Y	N
4. Local Tests		Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y		N	Y	UN	Y	Y		
5. Tied to Graduation	N	N	Y	N	UN	Y	Y	Y	N	LO		Y	N			N	Y		Y	Y	Y	N	N		
6. Tied to Promotion	N	N	N	LO	LO	N	N	LO	LO	LO		LO	LO			LO			LO	LO	N	N			
7. Grade Levels Tested	6 12	5+	3 6 9 12	4 8 12	3 9 11	10	8 or 9+	1-5 6,9 11	4 6 8-11	LO		LO				all	4-6 8 11, 12		LO	5 8 t.	9/12	4 8 11	3 6 11		
8. Remediation Req.	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N		N	N			N			N	Y	Y				
9. St. Funds/Remediation	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y*	N	N		N	N			N			N	N	Y				
10. Year Implemented	75	75	77	77	76	78	75	78		UN		74	81				78		80	77	78	76			
11. First Grad. Year	NA	NA	82	81	NA	81	79	79	NA	UN		78				NA	82		80	81	81	NA			
12. State Equiv. Exam		N	N	G	G	N	G	N	N	G		N	N			LO		G	N	G	N	N	Y		N
13. Test Areas																									
Reading	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√				√					√		√	√	√	√			
Writing		√	√	√	√	√	√					√							√	√	√	√			
Computation/Math		√	√	√	√	√	√	√				√					√		√	√		√			
Spelling		√						√									√					√			
Listening												√							√	√					
Communication	√			√			√					√													
Other (See page 3)	√					√	√	√				√					√		√	√	√				

: = by 1979

* = Oregon has competency certification.

States Expecting Modification before September 1978

1. Arizona — The state legislature currently is discussing a bill to implement statewide testing over state standards.
2. Connecticut — Dependent on legislative authorization, change is expected within a few months.
3. Delaware — Skills are to be assessed at the eleventh grade this year using the ACT-developed version of the AFL materials, but when graduation requirements are finalized, the resultant test will be based upon these performance objectives.
4. Georgia — New graduation policy being piloted in nine systems may lead to development of exit-type examinations.
5. Hawaii — Task force is presently developing recommendations for performance testing in grades 3, 6, 8, 10, and 12; a competency test to be required for graduation and alternatives for remediation. Recommendations will be presented to board of education for action in June. If approved, implementation will begin in 1978-79 school year.
6. Illinois — Legislation which would mandate statewide competency testing is pending.
7. Louisiana — The addition of state funds for remediation program based on state assessment results.
8. Maine — Legislature is now considering the results of the assessment and survey of public opinion.
9. Massachusetts — Advisory committee was appointed by the state board in March 1976. Is currently developing recommendations for state board on high school graduation requirements concerning competency testing. Board of education will be making a policy decision in June 1978.
10. Michigan — Legislation pending this spring will fund a program requiring tenth grade tests.
11. New Hampshire — A sampling pilot test will be done in fall of 1978.
12. New Jersey — Decisions must be made on writing assessment, graduation requirements, and assessing all goal areas by this date.
13. New York — The basic competency testing program will be reviewed by the Board of Regents in May 1978.
14. Ohio — State board of education is to make recommendations to the general assembly by July 1, 1978. We are presently conducting 13 regional public forums for citizen input.
15. Oregon — State board reviews standards every two years. They will be looking at graduation requirements, etc., summer of 1978.
16. Pennsylvania — Legislation pending. Bill in legislature, No. 669, would mandate some sort of statewide competency testing.
17. Rhode Island — It is possible that a policy will be adopted in Rhode Island by June 1978.
18. South Carolina — Law passed House and Senate.
19. Utah — Some type of competency evaluation is required but not necessarily a testing program. Supposed to be implemented in 1980 but may be extended.
20. Minnesota - Proposed state-wide testing rejected.

Compiled by Nancy De Leonibus

Additional Competency Requirements

1. Florida

   Consumer Skills
   (State sample only)

2. Georgia

   Career Development

3. Indiana

   Government
   Consumer Skills
   Science

4. Kentucky

   Language Skills
   Study Skills

5. Maryland

   Survival Skills
   Work
   Leisure
   Citizenship

6. Michigan

   Grades 4 and 7 only

   Science
   Social Studies
   Art
   Music
   Health Education

7. Missouri

   Government
   Economics
   Consumer Skills

8. Montana

   Reasoning
   Government, History
   Consumer Skills
   Science
   Health, Drugs

9. New Mexico

   Government, History
   Consumer Skills
   Health, Drugs
   Problem Solving
   Community Resources

10. New York

    Government, History
    Consumer Skills
    Science
    Health, Drugs

11. North Carolina

    Language Skills

12. Oregon

    Analyzing

    For Class of 1981

    Use basic scientific and technological processes
    Develop and maintain a healthy mind and body
    Be an informed citizen in the community, state, and nation
    Be an informed citizen in interaction with the environment
    Be an informed citizen on streets and highways
    Be an informed consumer of goods and services
    Function within an occupation or continue education leading to a career

13. Tennessee

    Grammar

14. Utah

    Reasoning
    Government, History
    Consumer Skills

15. Vermont

    Reasoning

16. Virginia

    Job Entry Skills

YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO WRITE TO US -- TO MAKE COMMENT, EXPRESS OPINION, RAISE QUESTIONS. PLEASE NOTE ALSO, THAT YOU ARE WELCOME TO REPRINT MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS TRANSCRIPT FOR NON-PROFIT USE. OPTIONS IN EDUCATION ALWAYS APPRECIATES A CREDIT LINE.